

Message Text

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DEPARTMENT PASS AS DESIRED

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PINS JA VS

SUBJ: AMBASSADOR NAKAYAMA'S REPORT ON SITUATION IN SAIGON

REF: SAIGON 4614

1. DURING CHAT WITH CHARGE DURING DEPARTURE CEREMONIES AT HANEDA APRIL 9, FOREIGN MINISTER MIYAZAWA MENTIONED REPORT OF AMBASSADOR NAKAYAMA FROM HIS RECENT TDY STINT IN SAIGON AND SUGGESTED WE ASK FONOFF FOR RUN-DOWN. POLCOUNS MORNING APRIL 10 RECEIVED ORAL SUMMARY OF REPORT, APPARENTLY AS CABLED FROM SAIGON, ALONG FOLLOWING LINES:

2. NAKAYAMA SPENT OVER ONE HOUR WITH PRESIDENT THIEU, WHOM HE HAS KNOWN FOR SOME TIME PERSONALLY SINCE HIS EARLIER TOUR AS JAPANESE AMBASSADOR IN SAIGON. NAKAYAMA CHARACTERIZED THIEU AS APPEARING ENERGETIC, UNWORRIED AND CONFIDENT. NAKAYAMA SAID THIEU TOLD HIM SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM "SERIOUS" BUT NOT "ALARMING". HE COMMENTED THAT MUNITIONS RESUPPLY SITUATION IS POOR, SO GVN FACED MILITARY DISADVANTAGES AND WAS FORCED TO REORGANIZE ITS DEFENSE LINES. HE WENT ON TO OBSERVE THAT THE ENEMY WAS NOT "STANDING STILL", AND THEY MIGHT ATTACK SAIGON OR THE DELTA, OR BOTH. MORALE OF ARVN DEPENDENT ON MILITARY SUPPLY FLOW. THIEU TOLD NAKAYAMA HE IS CONVINCED COMMUNISTS WILL NOT RESPOND TO A CALL FOR PEACE NEGOTIATIONS

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AS LONG AS MILITARY SITUATION GOING THEIR WAY. THIEU

EQUATED "ACCOMMODATION" WITH SURRENDER.

3. THIEU TOLD NAKAYAMA THAT HE HAD MET WITH GENERAL WEYAND AND BELIEVES U.S. ADMINISTRATION COMPLETELY SHARES PRESIDENT FORD'S VIEWS, BUT THE PROBLEM IS WITH CONGRESS. THIEU EXPRESSED OPINION THAT PRESIDENT FORD'S "INFLUENCE" HAS YET TO BE ESTABLISHED FIRMLY. THIEU SAID HE WAS STILL (APRIL 7) HOPEFUL THAT U.S. ASSISTANCE WOULD BE FORTHCOMING, BUT IF IT WERE NOT HE INTENDED TO USE UP EVERYTHING HE HAD AND GO DOWN AFTER FIRING THE LAST BULLET.

4. NAKAYAMA TOLD FONOFF THAT HE FELT CONVINCED THIEU WOULD FIGHT TO THE END AND HAD NO INTENTION OF SURRENDERING, OR SEEKING POLITICAL ACCOMMODATION. THIEU SPOKE VAGUELY OF THE LESSONS OF THE 50-YEAR HISTORY OF VIETNAM. NAKAYAMA REPORTEDLY MADE NO CLEAR JUDGMENTS HIMSELF AS TO STAYING POWER OF GVN, BUT QUOTED SAIGON OBSERVERS AS PREDICTING SAIGON WOULD FALL IN "SEVERAL WEEKS OR MONTHS". HE SAID MOST OBSERVERS ARE OVERWHELMINGLY PESSIMISTIC ABOUT ANY POSSIBILITY OF GVN TURNING THE TIDE. NAKAYAMA CONCLUDED THAT HE SAW NO ENCOURAGING SIGNS ON WHICH TO BASE A CONTRARY JUDGMENT.

5. COMMENT: ABOVE OFFERED FOR WHATEVER USE IT MAY BE, EVEN THOUGH IT DUPLICATES REFTEL IN SOME DEGREE. FONOFF INDICATED THAT NAKAYAMA'S ASSESSMENT WAS INCLUDED IN BRIEFING MATERIALS ON VIETNAM THAT MIYAZAWA TOOK WITH HIM TO WASHINGTON.
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